

Étienne de La Boétie ANTI DICTATOR

DISCOVRS DE LA SERVITVDE VOLONTAIRE



*AVOIR plusieurs seigneurs aucun bien ie n'y
voy;
Qu'vn, sans plus, soit le maistrè, & qu'vn seul
soit le roy,*

ce disoit Vlisse en Homere, parlant en public. S'il n'eust rien plus dit, finon c'estoit autant bien dit que rien plus; mais, au lieu que, pour le raisonner, il falloit dire que la domination de plusieurs ne pouuoit estre bonne, puisque

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Anti-Dictator Étienne de La Boétie

Étienne de La Boétie was the closest friend of Michel de Montaigne and the subject of the latter's famous essay "On Friendship." Here, however, he tackles a different, more impersonal relationship: that of ruler and ruled. The argument in this work is encapsulated in this quote: "A people enslaves itself, cuts its own throat, when, having a choice between being vassals and being free men, it deserts its liberties and takes on the yoke, gives consent to its own misery, or, rather, apparently welcomes it." Montaigne claimed that Boétie composed this work at the age of 18, and it was published over a decade after the young man's tragic death at 32. Some commentators up to the present day have argued that Montaigne himself was the author, and that he used the cover of his late friend's name because of its radical content. Whatever the truth, these words have inspired anti-authoritarian thinking for centuries. - Summary by Ben Adams

Read by Ben Tucker. Total running time: 02:08:26

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